

# kangeiko 1996

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Written in 1996 for publication in the MAF newsletter *Agatsu*.

I've been practicing Aikido for a year and a half now, and this was my second Kangeiko. Last year I practiced one or two hours each day for ten days and was amazed at how my practice picked up. I started practicing with more energy, and when it was all over, I got into the habit of practicing twice a week at 10 a.m! (I work until 2:30 in the morning 3 or 4 nights per week, so this was a big deal for me.)

This year, after finding out I could cover a couple of shifts at work, and getting mentally prepared for it, I decided to try to practice every class during Kangeiko. I found out that two of the other women from MAC were also planning to practice every class, and the three of us were thrilled to begin. I was so thrilled that I sprained my ankle on the way to work the Saturday before Kangeiko was to begin. Luckily, it was no big deal as I had my heart set on Kangeiko. One of the other women's husband got pulled over by the police on the way to taking her to the first day of Kangeiko, and had to go to the police station because his license was suspended. The cops were nice enough to let her husband drop her off at the dojo on the way to jail. Basically, we got off to a rocky start.

On the first day we women discovered that three men were also planning to practice every class of Kangeiko. There was outsider talk about a battle of the sexes, but the truth is, the six of us practiced every class (29 classes in all!) in harmony.

The days preceding Kangeiko, and the first couple of days were balmy (40's and 50's) for January, and I thought "Great! it will be like summer camp without the delicious food!". The weather ended up cooperating with Sensei, however, who has a clear idea of what is proper weather for Kangeiko. The remaining 8 days were below freezing, most of them with wind chill factors of below zero! We certainly warmed up in a hurry every day!

For four days I wrote down who I practiced with and what techniques we did for every class. While this was an excellent memory exercise, it fell by the wayside eventually, and I just practiced.

Kangeiko was an excellent chance for me to get to know my fellow students (especially the 5 others who practiced every class), and, like last year, to step up my practice a bit. It renewed my passion for Aikido, and my desire to train vigorously, to try to constantly hone my Aikido technique and share Aikido with others.

Those who completed at least one class per day during Kangeiko attended a dinner at a local Chinese restaurant. Some people were discussing the winter training and one said, "I thought that after this I would take a break, but now all I want to do is practice more." Sensei reminded us that completing Kangeiko is not an end unto itself, but a new beginning.



kangeiko 2014: Tuesday January 21st to Thursday January 30th.  
ten days of winter training